Ecclesia Gemens:

OR,

Two Discourses

On the mournful State of the Church, with a Prospect of her Dawning Glory.

Exhibited in a View

of two Scriptures, representing her as a *Myrtle-Grove* in a deep Bottom, and as a knot of Lillies among Thorns.

Psal. 68. 13. *Though ye have lien among the Pots, yet shall ye be as the Wings of a Dove covered with Silver, and her Feathers with yellow Gold.*

LONDON,
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To the Holy Church of Chriſt lately walking in Communion with Mr. I. C. and now with D. J. O. before whom theſe exerciſes were handled, and to whom they are now humbly preſented by

Theirs in the Fellowſhip of the Goſpel.

S. L.

THE VISION OF THE MYRTLE-GROVE.

1673. April. 6.

Zach. 1. 8.

I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red Horse, and he stood among the Myrtle-trees that were in the bottom, and behind him there were red Horses, speckled, and white.

THIS is a Comfortable Vision to the Church in a low and dark condition: For, upon her Humiliation by the Prophets Sermon of Repentance, *v.* 6. The Captain of the Lords Hosts appears in order to deliverance.

The Captivity was in part returned, but the Temple, whose Foun-

dation though laid, yet the Progress of its building interrupted, lay still in a ruinous state, and the City it self unwalled and in a mournful plight, and many of the people not hitherto come forth of *Babylon*: Their Harps hung yet upon the willows; but now they are to be taken down to be imployed in Songs of *Zion*, with Myrtle Crowns of Festival Joy upon their Heads.

Ps. 137. 2.

It suites with our estate since the return of our Fathers from Spiritual *Babylon*. For as yet the pure Temple-worship mourns in the dust, and the City of New *Jerusalem* lies in rubbish.

In this Prophetical Vision observe:

1. The Time, *v.* 7. The second year of *Darius Hystaspes*, 519 years before the Birth of our Lord, on the 24*th* Day of the 11*th* Moneth *Sebat*, answering to part of *January*, and more particularly, the Prophet saw this Vision in the Night.

By Night.] 1. To shew the darkness and difficulty of the Vision. 2. That it was a time of affliction to the Church. 3. That Christ the Captain

nin of the Church appeared but darkly to the Fathers of old.

2. The Place of the Vision, in a Bottom, *Bamezulah, in profundo*, which the *Chald.* Paraphrase turns בבבל in *Babylon*, which lay in a low Champion plain by the great River *Euphrates* in the Land of *Chaldæa*, and was noted, if I remember right, for fertility in this fragrant Shrub of Myrtle. *Edessa* in *Mesopotamia* had its name from Myrtles; and however, *Parthia* was famous for it, which was a neighbouring Province. 2. *Jer.* 51. 13. *Com. in* Plin. *l.* 15. *c.* 29.

3*dly*. The Objects presented in the Vision which are three.

A Captain upon a red Horse רכב *Equitans*, or *ascendens*, about to get up; as the LXX. expresse it, ἐμβεβηκὼς, ready to ascend upon his Horse, who is no other than that same Captain which appeared to *Joshuah* when entring upon his Wars against the *Canaanites*. I shall not determine with *A lapide*, that the [*Sus Adam*,] the red horse notes his Humanity; I dare not be so bold, but rather, as a Captain get- *Jos.* 5. 14.

ting up on his horſe of bloud, in order to the ſlaughter of his Enemies.

2. A Grove of Myrtle Trees in the midſt whereof ſtood this valiant Captain of the Lords Hoſts, ready to get up, or being aſcended, makes a ſtand till the time of his going forth againſt *Babylon*: For though *Babylon* were taken by *Cyrus* before this Viſion, yet there paſſed 4 years after this Exhibition to the Prophet, even juſt at the finiſhing of the Temple in the 6th. of *Darius*, when that Golden City was woſully ſackt, the Walls pull'd down, and the Gates demoliſh'd, and 3000 of her moſt noble Citizens ſtaked or crucified, and after a while *Babel* was totally laid in ruines by *Xerxes*.

Herodot. *l.*3. *p.*323. Uſſer. *annal.*

3. Behind this glorious Captain were placed in Martial Array, 3 ſorts of horſes, or 3 Troops or Regiments of various coloured horſes, Red, Speckled, and White.

By the Myrtle Grove is meant the Church of God; by the bottom, *Babylon*: By the Captain, Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God: By the Red Horſe,

Horſe, his deſign of War againſt *Babylon*: The 3 ſorts of Horſes behind him, firſt Red, noting bloudy wars againſt the Churches Enemies. 2*d*. The ſpeckled, ſignifying various Providences; ſometimes the Church victorious, and othertimes in an afflicted ſtate under the *Antiochian* Princes. 3*d*. White Horſes, repreſenting the Church in the end compleatly victorious and triumphant: All the Churches troubles ſhall end in victory; and theſe Horſes that attend upon Chriſt, go forth from among the Myrtle Trees, that is, the Angels who encamp about the Church, are ſometimes ſent abroad upon expeditions againſt her Enemies, arming and influencing of Nations one againſt another, to ſubdue thoſe who have impugned the Church, and to execute the vengeance of the Temple. *Iſ.* 51. 11.

This Viſion is given by God to the Prophet on purpoſe to encourage his People in going on with Temple-work, having formed the heart of *Darius*, to give forth another Edict beſides that of *Cyrus*, to

finish the stately structure of his Temple. Having thus touch'd upon the Scope of the Prophecy, let's descend to some Instructions from it. There be 3 Spring-heads from whence the streams of the observations may flow full pleasantly.

1. From the Time and Place.
2. The Myrtle Trees.
3. The Captain and his Forces.

1. 1. The Time: It was by Night, an obscure and dark Season. The Place was a deep Valley or Bottom; and both are fit Emblems of the troubles and afflictions of the Church.

Obs. 1. The Church of God after begun deliverances, may continue for a season under dark, doubtful, and afflictive Providences. *Israel*, after they were come out of *Egypt*, wandred 40 years in a howling Wilderness, and were exercised with 7 years Wars in *Canaan*, before they were settled under Vines and Fig-trees in that Land flowing with Milk and Honey.

Again, When *Judah* came out of *Babylon*, from the first of *Cyrus*, till *Nehe-*

Nehemiahs coming from *Shuſham* to build *Jeruſalems* Walls in the 20*th.* year of *Artaxerxes Longimanus*, there intervened fourſcore and two years: And in the later days, after the 1290 years are fully expired, there muſt be a flux of 45 years from the firſt deliverance till the compleat ſtate of the bleſſed times of the Church. I need not inſert any other particular inſtances, 'tis the wiſe method of Divine Providence,

536. 454. 82. Uſſer. *annals.* *Dan.* 12. 11, 12.

To hew down and cut off thoſe ſtubborn Spirits which hanker after *Egypt*, and long for the Fleſhpots, the Garlick and Onions of their old ſtate of bondage. They ſmell rank and unſavoury before God, that like the old murmuring *Iſraelites*, dare to call *Egypt* by the Title of the Land of *Canaan*; crying to *Moſes*, *Thou haſt brought us out of a Land flowing with Milk and Honey, to kill us in the Wilderneſs.*

1. *Numb.* 16, 13.

Gradually to prepare his faithful people, who like *Caleb* and *Joſhua* follow the Lord fully, for thoſe bleſſed and glorious Enjoyments: As the horrid Rocks and Mountains

2.

of

of *Pindus* set off the pleasant verdure of the *Thessalian Tempe*: So did the *Arabian* Desarts, the parching Droughts, the fiery Serpents, and the Swords of *Bashan* superadd a varnishing lustre to *Canaan* the glory of all Lands.

Ezek. 20. 6, 15.

3. To manage the ruine and extirpation of the Churches Enemies by degrees; not all at once, lest the beasts of the field increase too numerous. To give his Enemies some time and space of repentance, and to leave them without Apology; and that the Churches hands be not too full of labour and travel. But first *Amaleck* must have a blow from *Joshua*, and taste of the sharpness of his glittering Sword; then the King of *Arad* (a City 4 miles south of *Malliattha* or *Amalek* according to *Jerom*) must bow down their neck under his victorious foot; then the Pools of *Heshbon* must be dried up, and the Iron Bed of *Og* must be drawn in triumph; and lastly, *Midian* with her 5 Princes, and *Balaam* with his Inchanted Altars must flame in sacrifice to Divine Vengeance, before they

Deut. 7. 22.

Exod. 17. 10.

Numb. 21. 1.

they pass over *Jordan* to conquer and enjoy the Land of Promise. *Obs.* 2.

In the next place we may observe, that though the Church be overshadowed with a dark night, and sit silently upon the ground in a deep bottom, as represented on the reverse of *Vespasian's Coine* weeping under a Palm-Tree; yet here she is brought to erect her countenance with a smiling and joyful aspect into the Myrtle Grove, and Christ her Lord and Husband present with her: All dark, but the bright Face of Christ illustrating the Face of the Prophet with a clear Vision, and the Face of the Spouse with some radiations of joy. Though the State of the Church be dark, yet the Vision is bright; Gods work goes on though it be by night. Though the Church might not as yet see the Prophet, yet she enjoys her Captain; and though his help be invisible, yet 'tis certain. Though the Church think of little but continuing darkness, and a long and stormy time of trouble, like a *January* night, in which Moneth this Vision ap-

appeared, yet morning will come: *Phoſphorus*, the Morning Star will ſhine, and the Sun will ſhortly gild the Eaſtern Mountains with his glorious Beams. The *Babylonian* Enemies think they ſhall always detain the captive Church in their Dungeon bottoms, but the ſhining Ruler of the Day will not fail to appear in
Iſa. 104. 20. that his glorious Epiphany, and chaſe all the wild Beaſts of the Night into diſmal holes and caverns. This Viſion comes by night, when the Church little dreams of deliverance. and leſs diſcerns the approach of her Heaven-born Captain. Watchman,
Iſa. 21.12, what, of the night? Behold here
9, cometh a Chariot of Men, a couple
2. of Horſemen: *Babylon* is fallen, is fallen; go up, O *Elam*, beſiege, O *Media*. Though the Church lye proſtrate in a deep Valley. yet 'tis a Valley of Viſion: Though ſhe cry
Hoſ. 2. 15. out in the Valley of *Achor*, yet God will give her both Vineyards and Myrtle Groves from thence. The Church ſhall be both fruitful and fragrant in the midſt of couchant Vallies at the foot of the proud and

loſty

lofty Mountains of the World. The Church never ſighs out her ſorrows in ſo dark a night, but a new Moon may appear with a little light and ſome brightning Viſions of mercy. Some Prophets to comfort, ſome Princes hearts awakening towards her reſcue, who, like *Darius*, ſhall ſhortly put foot in ſtirrup againſt her bloudy enemies. Neither is there any particular Member of the Church in ſo dark and bluſtring a Tempeſt, but may find ſome Songs in the night. He to whom the night ſhineth as the day by the luſtre of his omniſcient eye, beholds his darling Spouſe in the profoundeſt bottoms of tribulation, and ſends his Prophets with Glorious Viſions to erect and illuſtrate their gloomy and dejected Spirits. *Job* 35. 10. *Pſ.* 139. 12.

The 2*d*. part of this verſe contains the Viſion of the Myrtle Grove in a deep bottom: Hence 2.

The Church of God in her loweſt eſtate and darkeſt time is highly valued of God: It is his Pleaſant Plant, his Garden, his Paradiſe, his Myrtle Grove, more delicious than *Obſ.*

thoſe

those admired pendulous Gardens of *Semiramis* in *Babylon*. He planted these fragrant Shrubs: This sensible Plant, dedicated to his Love, he waters and watches it every moment. He always beholds it and beautifies it with his presence and walk: He shews it to his Prophets by Divine Moon-light, and sends them to tell his Church and People, how greatly he esteems and values it. Though the night be cloudy and stormy, and the Church hardly to be kenned by carnal eyes were they awake; yet he whose eyes are like a flame of fire, can make a sudden light to shine about his Shepherds and the Flocks of his Church by night, and turn their Fears into exquisite Joys, and teach them to tune their rural Pipes in consort with the Heavenly Host praising God, and so open the eyes of these Keepers of the Vines and Myrtles, that they shall behold the Captain of their Salvation in the midst of the Grove, with 3 Troops of Angels for their protection and comfort; not a Tree but a Horseman assign'd it like the Palms in the Temple

Rev. 1.14.

Luke 2.9.

Temple always interwoven with Cherubims.

But why is the Church compared to a Myrtle Grove? Not to be over curious and nice; I ſhall only Spiritualize a few Notions about it. Q.

1. The Myrtle is but a mean, low ſhrub to note the humility of the Church and its Members: They have no aſpiring thoughts like the proud ambitious Oaks of *Baſhan*. They take up but little room in the World, and do not kill the Herbage by poyſonous droppings or venemous ſhades. *Learn of me*, ſaith Chriſt, *for I am meek and lowly, and you ſhall find reſt to your Souls.* Meekneſs to bear reproof, meekneſs to return mild and ſoft anſwers, meekneſs not to murmur againſt afflicting Providences, are the notes of a humble Myrtle. Of a meek Spirit like *Moſes*, which is with God of a great price. Meekneſs and quietneſs go hand in hand: Meddleſome, touchy, and quarrelſome Spirits, are not led by the Spirit of God. There grow no Thorns upon theſe Balſam Plants which 1. *Mat.* 11. 29. 1 *Pet.* 3. 4.

which thrive in cool Vallies at the bottoms of lofty and barren Mountains ---- *& amantes frigora Myrtos.* Saints and gracious Persons are not so soon touch'd with direful Thunderbolts, nor inflam'd by the lightning Flashes of rage and anger.

2. 2. The Myrtle is ever Green: Though low, yet always verdant. So lovely a Green, it tempts the eye with delight to spend contemplations upon it; and 'tis always green
Ps. 1. 3. like that Godly Man whose Leaf never withers: No cold Winter strips them of their Holy profession. Hypocrites are Sunshine Professors, Somer Birds, Butterflies that come forth when the Church enjoys her *May*: But Gods true Myrtles are green in *January*, the Moneth of this blessed Vision. The storm of Persecution may break their Boughs, but not destroy their greenness; they may stand in a deep Valley, the Church may be driven into holes, but still retains her native emerald greenness. As the Dove may be forced into a cleft of the Rock; but mourns and

and retains the voice of a Dove still. *Songs* 2. 14.

3. The Myrtle is eminent for Fragrancy. All is sweet and perfumed in a Myrtle. The Berries, Flowers, Leaves, all most fragrant. The Rose its Leaves are bitter, though the smell sweet; but here all's desireable, and therefore by the Ancients dedicated unto Love. 3.

--Vitis Jaccho, formosæ veneri Myrtus. &c.

Whatever the Church yields, is eminent. The thoughts and discourses of Saints are like the fine white Flowers of the Myrtle, they are full of candour, and breath holiness in every Air, in every Region. The Life of Saints smells fragrantly, like Christ his Mouth is most sweet: *He is altogether, all over lovely.* *Songs* 5. 16.

4. The Fruit of the Myrtle is Medicinal: It is astrictive, says *Dioscorides*, and therefore good against spitting of Bloud, and beneficial to the Stomach, ἁρμόζων φαλαγγιοδήκτοις καὶ σκορπιοπλήκτοις σὺν οἴνῳ; 4. *l.* 1. *c.* 155.

Myrtle

Myrtle Wine is profitable against the bitings of the Spider *Phalangium*, and the stings of Scorpions. Gracious persons are of a healing nature to such as breath forth cruelty against the Church, and whose Stomachs are full of poyson and malignant venom: They are like the Trees of Paradise for the healing of the Nations wherein they dwell. A Child of God, much more a Church of Christ should be like a Colledge of Physicians to a diseased World. Truly, what is this miserable forlorn World but a meer Hospital of crazy, wounded, and leprous persons. Here lye some with limbs broken in Satans drudgery, others raging under intollerable pains, their very Nerves and Bones rotten through the Sins of youth, others full of Boyls and putrifying Sores from lust and corruption, and all poyson'd with the venom of Original Sin. O let Saints carry about the Balm of *Gilead* to cure the wounded of the Daughter of their People.

Rev. 22.2.

The

5. The Vision exhibits these Trees in a cluster: It is a Myrtle Grove to shew Communion. The Church is compared to a Flock of Sheep, to a Flight of Doves, to a Knot of Lillies, to a Grove of Myrtles. Saints love society, so it be a society of Saints. It was a custom of old among the Gentiles to dance in their Temples with Myrtle Crowns upon their Heads, to signifie amity, love, and delight in each other: How much more excellent shall be the Communion of Saints, when instead of the Thorns shall spring the Firr Trees, and instead of the Briar or Nettle of the Heathen, shall arise the Myrtle for a Name to the Lord; an everlasting Sign to beautifie the Sanctuary of his Holiness, which shall never be cut up. 5. Athen. Dipnos. l. 15. p. 676. Is. 55. 13. 60. 13.

1. Learn, That Myrtles may grow in *Babylon*, nay in Groves, in Church communion, though in a low and secret Valley by the waters of *Babilon*, till they are transplanted to *Canaan*. Captive Myrtles shall be Crowns of Glory in the Temple above. Saints may for a season be, Vs. 1.

be, and thrive in a naughty world, in a hostile Country, and preserved from the foot of violence: Saints may sing Psalms in *Cæsars* Houshold,
Phil. 4. 22. and be *chiefly* saluted by an holy Apostle. The Lilly may be sheltred by Thorns, and the myrtle environ'd by a sharp *Babylonian* Quickset: Our Lord prays the Father not to take his Church out of the World,
Joh. 17. 15. but to defend them from the evil of
Acts 2. 40. it, and save them from the untoward generation wherein they live. Were it not for his Myrtles in this Valley of Tears, God would soon send up his Ax upon the Oaks of *Bashan*, and lift up his Hammer upon *Babylon*. They must propagate and increase for a season, till the time that *Babylon*'s ripe for vengeance, and the second *Solomon*'s Garden in *Zion*
Songs 6. 2. measur'd out into Beds, made delectable with Walks, and watred
4. 15. with Streams from *Lebanon*, and every way fitted by culture for the reception of sweet-scented Myrtles,
Ezek. 34. 29. to be Plants of renown in the Glorious State of the Church which hastens towards us.

The

2. The Churches dark and low estate moves the Divine bowels to mercy. Now comes a Prophet into the Valley, and a Vision meets him for the Churches Joy in the 2d. of *Darius*. This great Prince strengthens the former Edict of *Cyrus* in despight of *Samaritan* hatred; and so do the following Princes, notwithstanding *Tobiahs* Alliance to the High-Priest *Eliashib*. It's the God of *Israel* who melts and bends the hearts of Princes, and makes them flexible towards his Church; that the prostrate Vine may begin to climb up and be supported by the Elm of Magistracy. He turns their hearts to hate his People for a season for their correction, and then repents according to the multitude of his mercies, and makes them to be pitied of all those that carried them captives. He puts it into the hearts of the 10 Kings to fulfill his Will, and to agree, and give their Kingdom to the Beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled, and then he remembers his Holy Covenant.

Vs. 2. *Ezr.* 6. 1, 14. *Neh.* 13. 4. *Ps.* 105. 25. *Ps.* 106. 46. *Rev.* 17. 17.

3. To

Vſ. 3. 3. To encourage his People to go on with Temple-work. Shall the heart of *Darius* be enlarged towards the duſt and rubbiſh of *Zion*, and and ſhall not *Zachary* prophecy, and *Zerubabel* build, and *Joſhua* miniſter with a fair Mitre upon his Head, and all the People ſhout for joy, crying, *Grace, grace*, to the Glory of the 2*d*. Temple, which was far greater than the former, becauſe the Meſſenger of the Lord of Hoſts brought peace into it.

Zech. 3. 5.

Hag. 2. 9.

Vſ. 4. 4. It's good to abide in communion with the Church of God; to be but a Berry, a Flower, a Leave of the Myrtle Tree is a great honour: Let Saints keep cloſe to this fragrant Garden. God ſmells a ſavour of reſt in ſuch Aſſemblies. Every Church is a Tree, and all the Trees make Gods Myrtle Grove in the Earth: For as they have their fragrancy, ſo they enjoy whole Regiments of tutelary Angels for their defence; yea Chriſt himſelf delights to be no where elſe, and to be ſeen among them as a Captain, getting up on his Red Horſe againſt their Enemies.

enemies. They may come out with their Swords and Hatchets, their Axes and Acts of Hostility, but shall never be able to cut up the Myrtle Grove of the Church, that has so glorious a Captain to own it for his Garden and defend it. Upon all the Glory shall be a defence. It's like the Ancient *Eden* guarded by Cherubims with flaming Swords, turning every way to keep the Path of the Trees of Life. Let Saints persist in fertility and fragrancy, and Christ will ever make himself visible with troops of Angels in the midst and round about his Fragrant Grove.

Is. 4. 5.

Gen. 3. 24.

I pass on now to the 3*d*. Particular, *The Vision of the Captain and his Forces.*

3.

He that's called a Man in the Text riding on a red Horse, holds conference with the Prophet, and the Prophet stiles him *his Lord*, *v.* 9. and *the Angel of the Lord*, *v.* 11.

Prophets and Angels hold heavenly communion, but especially the Angel of the covenant. Now, that this Person is the Lord Jesus Christ,

the same who was with *Moses* in the
Acts 7.38. Bush at *Horeb* in the Wilderness,
may appear;

1. 1. By his superiority over An-
Jos. 5.14. gels. The Captain of the Lords
Hosts, brandishing his Sword before
Joshua near *Jericho*, was now with
Ps. 45.3. his Sword girt upon his Thigh, like
a Prince of Might, ascending the
Red Horse of War: He who is Head
Eph. 1.22. over all Principalities and Powers to
his Church.

2. 2. By his Intercession for the
Church, *v* 12. He is the great Me-
diator; we never observe Ordina-
ry Angels praying to God for the
Church in the Sacred Page: Though
often praising him, to teach that none
ought to interpose in that glorious
Office of Christ.

3. 3. By his Dictates to the Pro-
phet. He speaks not of himself,
when he declares the Angelical Fun-
ctions of visiting the State of the
Church and of the whole Earth. *But
these* (says the Captain, *v.* 10.)
pointing to the 3 Troops of Holy
Angels behind him; *these are they
whom the Lord hath sent to visit the*
Church

Church in her ſcattered eſtate through the ſeveral Provinces of the Earth under the Dominion of *Babilon.*

4. By his Inſpiration of Prophecy in a way of command, when he had received a comfortable anſwer from the Lord to his Prayer for the Church: Cry thou, *Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, I am jealous for* Jeruſalem *and for* Zion; that is, *for the City and Temple, for the Politick and Eccleſiaſtick Eſtate of his People with great jealouſie,* v. 14. 4.

Next, we are to conſider him as a Rider upon a Red Horſe. A Horſe in Eaſtern Hieroglyphicks and Viſions, was an Emblem of War, of Victory, and Triumph: A Red Horſe, of Bloud ſhed in War in order to conqueſt; to note that Chriſt goes with a Spirit of vengeance againſt his Churches Adverſaries, and returns with Garments dyed red from *Bozrah*, all ſprinkled and daſhed with the Bloud of the Slain. Nay, ſometimes he rides his Horſes up to the Bridles in Bloud in the Valley of *Hadadrimmon.* *Iſ.* 63. 4. *Iſ.* 63. 1. *Rev.* 14. 20.

Then come in view his *Satellites*, or the Generous Troops under his Imperial Standard. Red Horſes, ſpeckled, and white, repreſenting the Holy Angels, multitudes of them marſhall'd in battel-array for various Expeditions, with the Triumphant iſſue of all their Wars on behalf of the Church. That Horſes and Chariots are Symbols of Angels, may be obſerved from other Scriptures; as, 2 *Kin.* 2. 11. and 6. 17. and *Hab.* 3. 8. &c. The Chariots of God are 20000, even thouſands of Angels; and not to mention the alluſions hereto in other Authors only that in *Suidas* at preſent.

Pſ. 68. 17.

Suid. p. 1271. Ἵππων ὴ λευκῶν ὄψις ἀγγέλων φάσις: *The Viſion of White Horſes is an appearance of Angels.* I ſhall come to an obſervation.

Obſ. That Chriſt doth frequently appear to his Church in her diſtreſs under a warlike poſture: He is head of Angels for protection to his Myrtle Garden. One Angel might have ſufficed had God ſeen good, but for more abundant comfort he marſhalls whole Squadrons and Legions of Spiritual

ritual light Horſemen for their Service. Above all, let's take notice of ſome excellencies in this Captain General of the Cherubims that is now upon march for the Salvation of his Church.

1. He is a praying Captain, and mighty prevalent with God; like a Prince with God, like a Prieſt upon his Throne; both Prince and Prieſt on horſeback. He never prays but is anſwered, and he ever prays before he goes forth upon expeditions as he does in this Viſion, *v.* 13. and therefore in righteouſneſs he judgeth and maketh war. It's ſaid of old, *Nulla fides pietaſq; viris qui caſtra ſequuntur.* No faith or loyalty in the field. But behold, here's one with a double-edged Sword in his Mouth, a fervent prayer to make his Sword victorious. We have here the Sword of the Lord as well as of *Gideon*; a Sword from behind the *Ephod*, none like it; it hath cut down many a Philiſtine. The Sword of God is the Sword of Chriſt: Prayer whets the Sword and courage brandiſhes it. In his Majeſty he rides on proſperouſ-

1. Zech. 6. 13. Rev. 19. 11. Judg. 7. 18. Pſ. 45. 4.

ly, and baths it in the hearts of his Enemies.

2. 2. A Captain wise for conduct: The councel of peace is between his
Zach. 6. 13. Helmet and Mitre. He is a Kingly and Royal Captain in order to the execution of his Priestly and Prophetical Office. He fights not for warsake but for peace: He hates them that delight in war and spin out long Sieges for large Wages. His End is to set Peace in the Earth, an Universal Peace as long as the Sun
Is. 2. 4. and Moon endure. He designs to bring all the Swords and Spears of his Warriours to the Smiths Forge, and to fashion them into Sithes and Plow-shares, into Sickles and pruning-hooks. In *his* days shall the
Ps. 72. 7. Righteous flourish, and abundance of peace עד בלי ירח *usq; ad non lunam*; till there be Moon no more. Yea, no less wise in management of his Armies for this glorious Design: Insomuch, that Angels who excell in wisdom, disdain not to march at his command, and wheel about at the clangor of his Trumpet. There's no mutiny in all Heavens Army. *Alexanders*

anders Soldiers when they were in the *Indies* among the *Orita*, would march no further though to finiſh the worlds Conqueſt and dip their feet in the Eaſtern Ocean: But here is an unwearied Army that march up and down through the whole Earth at his command. Angels are his Creatures, delighting to do his Will. The Inhabitants of *Petra* in *Sogdiana* built upon an inacceſſible Rock, jeered *Alexander*, and askt him whether his Soldiers had wings: But behold here are winged Soldiers riding upon winged Horſes that can fly into Cities at their Pleaſure. Such a Captain wages war on behalf of his Church. This is he, who fought from Heaven againſt the *Egyptians* and *Pharaoh* in the Red Sea. He taught *Joſhua* to lye in ambuſh againſt *Ai*. He inſtructed *Gideon* to aſtoniſh the *Midianites* by Lamps and Pitchers into a panick fear. It's he, who comes from *Edom*, with garments dyed red from *Bozrah*, glorious in his bloudy apparel, and marching in the greatneſs of his Strength. This is the *David*, who guides all ac-

Curt. & Arian.

v. 11.

Curt. *l.* 7. *c.* 11.

Exod. 14. 14, 25.

Joſh. 8. 2.

Jud. 7. 16.

Iſ. 63. 1.

Pſ. 78. 72. according to the integrity of his heart, and by the skilfulneſs of his hands.

3. 3. A Captain ſucceſsful and victorihus: He ſhall ſubdue the people
Pſ. 45. 5. under him. Succeſsfulneſs in a Captain is a mark of Honour ſtampt upon him by God, to ſignifie that ſuch ſhould be uſed. Such a character was imprinted upon *Joſhua*: *The*
Joſ. 1. 9. *Lord thy God is with thee whither ſoever thou goeſt.* Though the Church hath ſometimes been oppreſt for a while, yet Chriſt never went forth attended with his Angelical Troops, but his Sword returned fat with the bloud of the ſlain. We need not range into the Annals of Ancient times; for even ſince the Incarnation, this Prince of *Iſrael*, this *Michael*, one like unto God hath fixt his Trophies with mighty honour upon the tops of the higheſt Mountains. In what triumphant Chariots did he ride up to the Capitol in the
Rev. 12. 7. days of *Conſtantine* at the ſubduing of the *Pagan* perſecuting *Roman* Empire: What Songs of deliverance filled the Church in the times of *Theodoſius*

dofius the great. He will perform the like and greater atchievements against Papal *Rome*. For the Lamb shall overcome them who is Lord of Lords, and King of Kings. *Rev.* 17. 14.

4. He is a Captain of numerous Angels, that excell in ſtrength. He leads thoſe thundring Legions into field, who love the Church, and delight in employment as miniſtring Spirits for the heirs of Salvation. *Heb.* 1. 14. Theſe Angels converſe among the Myrtle Trees, as well as their glorious Captain, and go forth for intelligence, and ſpy out the ſecreteſt counſels of the Adverſaries: So that if ſtrength, number, policy, intelgence and ſucceſs can make an Army happy, the Saints and the Church are bleſſed. Nay, they are ſuch as no dint or force of their enemies can touch or wound them: they fight inviſibly: they need no ſcaling Ladders to climb and aſſault the Cities of their Enemies; they can either fly over or pierce through their ſtrongeſt Walls and ſet the Church at reſt, whenſoſoever infinite Wiſdom ſhall think meet. 4.

v. 1. Wo to the Churches Enemies, who think they gird on their Armour against men like themselves; 'tis a grand mistake. The mighty Angels are drawn up in Batalia against them. When *Julian* was shot by a casual Arrow; it's reported that he flung his bloud into the Air against Christ, appearing to him καὶ τῆς σφαγῆς αὐτὸν ἐσαιτιώμενος and accused him of his slaughter: Others say, that he cried out with scoff and blasphemy, *Thou hast overcome me O Galilean, thou hast overcome me.* But whether Christ himself, or an Angel by his ordination, as others report, it alters the case but little, since we are sure it was like the Arrow ordained against *Ahab*, it hit by the assignation and conduct of Heaven; or as *Sozomen* phrases θεόθεν αὐτὸν ἀναιρεθῆναι, he was slain by God, and received the due reward of his infamous taunt against our blessed Lord. For when he was marching against the *Persians*, he sorely threatned the Christians that the Carpenters Son should not avail them. To which a Prophetical person

Sozomen *l.* 6. *c.* 2. *p.* 366. Theodoret. *l.* 3. *c.* 20. Cassendor. *Trip. Hist. l.* 6. *c.* 47. Niceph. *l.* 10. *c.* 35.

Soz. *ibid.*

ſon ſmartly replied, that he was preparing a Coffin for *Julian*, and he was buried with ſcorn in the Suburbs of *Tarſus*, by a rabble piping and dancing, and exclaiming, *O great fool, where are now thy Propheſies? God and his Chriſt have overcome thee: So let all thine enemies periſh O Lord.* The great God hath all the Hoſts in Heaven and Earth at his back: Various ſorts and offices of Angels, ſome red, others ſpeckled and white, alluding to the diverſities of Colours in the Standards of Armies, to know their Leaders, and to keep rank and order. *Ælian* hath writ his Tacticks, and *Polyænus* his Stratagems, but no Methods or Policies like theſe of the Angelical Army, who lye in ambuſh behind the Myrtle Trees, and ſpread their Nets over the Heads of [the ten-horned Beaſt of *Babylon*.

Jud. 8.

Ezek. 17. 20. & 32. 3.

Let not the Church be troubled, if ſometimes the Speckled Horſes appear, though various adminiſtrations interweave the Churches comforts. *April* will paſs, and a durable Somer follow: What begins with red, goes

Vſ. 2.

goes on with speckled, and ends in white. The Combat is bloudy at first, but always successful, and shall be crowned with victory. The Church is like the *Roman* Empire, whereof the Historian said, *Pugna victi sed nunquam bello:* A Battel may sometimes go off dubious but never overcome in a war. The Churches Myrtles shall never be cut down so long as an Angel can keep the field, he will protect them. So long as the Captain of the Lords Hosts wears his Myrtle Crown, he'll lead his Church in pleasant measures in the Wildernes of *Shur*, and teach them to sing the triumphal Song of *Moses* and the Lamb on the brink of the Red Sea, while the *Egyptian* Carcasses dance upon the waters in regular order to the Churches Sonnets.

Corona Myrtea.

Exod. 15. 22.

Vs. 3. Let this exercise the faith of Saints: Though they sit heavy in a dark night, yet morning will come: Though the Church mourn in a gloomy bottom, yet at length she shall be advanced on the top of the highest Mountains. Though wicked e-

Vs. 2. 2.

nemies

nemies compass them round for a while: yet the Host of Angels within them shall break through and put all the Armies of the Aliens to flight. The fourth watch of the night though the darkest, yet 'tis neareſt the morning, and the deepeſt place of the Valley is next to the foot of the Mountain for aſcent.

Let this Viſion comfort the Church that God is pleaſed to ſend Prophets to manifeſt the iſſue of all their troubles. They ſhall not only be delivered in due time, but they ſhall know it before-hand to aſwage their ſorrows, and to heighten their expectations of deliverance. Though the Viſion be given by night, yet he ſhines upon the head of his *Zachary*, and does nothing but what he reveals to his Servants the Prophets; and we muſt enquire from *them* not only our duty in a night of darkneſs, but our comfort alſo in the Valley of affliction. Let's remember to keep to the ſociety of Myrtles, if we would enjoy the preſence of Chriſt, the protection of Angels, the viſions of *Amos* 3.7.

of Prophets, and final victory over the Churches Enemies.

*Vſ.*5. *Add.* The laſt Uſe ſhould be for inquiry after the end of the Viſion when the white horſes of victory and triumph ſhall appear to the Church: As he ſaid to the man clothed in linnen, *How long ſhall it be to the end of theſe wonders?* Or as that Saint enquired of the *Palmoni* or the wonderful Numberer, *How long ſhall it be that the Sanctuary and the Hoſt ſhall be trodden under foot?* And he ſaid unto him, 2300 *days, then ſhall the Sanctuary be cleanſed.*

*Dan.*12.6. 8.14.

2 *K.*25.8. *Jer.* 52. 12. Uſſer. 2300 588 1712.

Let's count then from the burning of the City and Temple of *Jeruſalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar* in the 19*th.* year of his Reign, which was concurrent with the 588*th.* vulgar year before the Nativity of our bleſſed Lord: From which time, if we reckon 2300 years, it leads us by the hand to the common year of our Lord 1712. About which time the pure Worſhip which hath been oppoſed and confuſed ever ſince the ruin of *Solomon*'s Temple, it's very likely may be reſtored to an Evangelical

lical Glory, and the abominations of desolation removed out of the way. I know what is said about the literal fulfilling of this Text, under *Antiochus*, and the mystical in the days of *Julian*; but I take it to be a more comprehensive Oracle, not to be here amply discussed. As for *Julians* time, when the *Jews* attempted to rebuild the Temple by his Edict in scorn to our Saviours Prophecy in the year 363, when *Julian* was 4*th* time Consul with *Salustius Promotus*. We find no account of any Sacrifice then offered, for they were but cleering the Rubbish. How then can this be an *Epoche* from the taking away that Sacrifice which was not then offered; no, nor since the days of *Titus*. Besides *Julian* did this in a mock-favour to the *Jews*, and stood not with an Army in the Holy Place or City, for he came no nearer than about *Antioch* in his march to *Persia*; and therefore this can be no root of numeration in this case.

Another gracious manifestation of the time is in the 12*th*. Chapter, which must be understood of the taking

king away Evangelical Worship for
Dan. 12. 7. the time, times and a half mentioned,
v. 7. are distinctly and distinctly ap-
7. 25. plyed to the duration of the ten-
horned beast, in the *7th Chapter*;
Rev. 11. 2. and is coincident with 1260 days in
3.
13. 5. *John*, or the 42 months of their
trampling down the Holy City, de-
taining the Woman in the Wilder-
ness and the Witnesses in sack-cloth.
But in asmuch that *Daniel* adds 30
days to the 1260, it may be sugge-
sted that he reflects upon the Resti-
tution of *Israel* and their conversion
to offer up spiritual Sacrifice, which
may be performed some short time
after the resurrection of the Estate
of the Church in the West. So then
if the Ten-horned Beast rose in the
Ruines of the *Roman* Empire: It's
but considering when that City was
taken, and the Imperial State demo-
lisht and finisht, and connex the
1290
410 1260 or 1293; and the blessed
times will appear to the comfort and
1700 joy of the Church.

Rome was first taken by *Alaricus*
A. 410.

A

A ſecond time by *Genſerieus*, *A.* 455.

The third by *Odoacer*, *A.* 476. When having taken *Rome*, depoſed *Auguſtulus*. *Paulus Diaconus* ſubjoynes, *Ita Romanorum apud* Romam *Imperium toto terrarum orbe venerabile & Auguſtalis illa ſublimitas, quæ ab Auguſto quondam Octaviano erecta eſt, cum hoc Auguſtulo periit.* Thus the Empire of the *Romans* at *Rome*, venerable through the whole World, and that imperial dignity which roſe in *Auguſtus*, periſht in *Auguſtulus*. Paul. Diacon. *in add. ad* Eutrop. *l.* 16. *p.* 155.

Bleſſed is he that readeth and they that heare the words of this Prophecy, καὶ τηροῦντες and that keep the things written therein, for the time is at hand. The word τηρεῖν ſometimes ſignifies Aſtronomical Obſervations. We ought to be more curious and diligent in calculating the motions of Scripture-times than the moſt accurate Obſerver of Eclipſes and other Heavenly Configurations which are of great uſe in Scripture Chronology. The Throne of this 2*d. David* is more eſtabliſht than the Sun or the *Rev.* 1. 3. *Pſ.* 89. 36, 37.

the Moon before him, and as a faithful Witness in Heaven. *Behold, he*
Rev. 22 7. *cometh quickly, blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the Prophecy of this Book.*

Obj. But some may say, What comfort is this to us, who it may be, are never like to see these glorious times; let us make our calling and election sure, that we may enter into the Eternal Joy of our Lord.

A. I answer: Of all things in the World let's first make sure of our own Salvation, and clear our evi-
2 Pet. 1. 11. dences to eternal life, that we may have abundant entrance into the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour. And *then*, let the prosperity of *Sion* lye warm at our hearts. All the Holy men of old took great delight in beholding the Churches Glory,
Ps. 102. 14. though but in the Glass of Vision; Nay they took pleasure in her stones and favoured the dust thereof: For
16. when the Lord shall build up *Zion*, he shall appear in his glory. This
18. shall be written for the Generation to come and the people that shall be created, shall praise the Lord. The

times

times of refreshing *shall* come, and the restitution of all things whereof God hath spoken by the mouth of *all* his Holy Prophets since the world began; and we ought to be mindful of the words spoken before by the holy Prophets and Apostles concerning the promise of his coming; looking for, and hastning to the coming of the day of God, when there shall be a new Heaven and a new *Earth* wherein dwelleth righteousness, testifying that Holy *Paul* hath spoken of these things in his Epistles: *When the Creature it self (distinct from Saints, v. 23.) shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God.* Shall the *great* God think it *meet* in his heavenly wisdom and goodness to the Church to foretell by *all* his Holy Prophets and Apostles these glorious times? Shall the Son of God receive this discovery from the Father and signifie it to his Angel, and send it by his Angel to his Servant *John* his beloved Disciple. What a magnificent *apparatus* is here from God the Father to the Son, from

Acts 3.21. 2 *Pet.* 3.2. 13. 15. *Rom.* 8.21.

from his Son to the Angel, and from the Angel to *John*! Such as is before no Book of Holy Scripture besides, and this upon the Lords Day to an Apostle in the Spirits extasie, and to a bosom Apostle in tribulation, and in the Kingdom and Patience of Jesus Christ. Nay, what a Majestical Scene is laid down in the 4*th*. Chapter, which is wholy spent in preparation for these Visions of things to come. A door opened in Heaven, and a voice like a Trumpet, and a glorious Throne appearing, and a Person upon it in visage like the various-coloured Jasper and the incarnate Sardine, and the Rainbow of the Covenant like the green Emerald round about the Throne, And shall minute, silly, mortal worms make light of these things, and despise to study the splendid radiant Propheſies let down from Heaven as a token of Gods love to his Church; It becomes not any, who profess themselves the Servants of the most high God. Are they wiser than *Daniel*, who understood the number of the years by Books, and set himself

v. 10.

Dan. 19. 2.

Ezek. 28. 8.

ſelf to prayer about it. Yea, the Angel of the Covenant urges the number of the years in prayer, and the Spirit of God ſets it down for a point of wiſdom to count the number of the Beaſt. To what end? but for the conſolation of the Church when they know by the mouth of his holy Prophets that her warfare is accompliſhed; and that God would in due time raiſe up one from the North, and the riſing of the Sun. *Behold, behold I will give to* Jeruſalem *one that bringeth good tidings* It's a great reviving to the hearts of Saints who are affectionately inclin'd to the good and welfare of *Zion*, to hear that God will bring down his proud enemies, and ſhortly make *Jeruſalem* the praiſe and joy of the whole Earth; and though themſelves ſhould not ſurvive to ſee all the goodneſs that God will ſhew to his people; yet like good old *Simeon* will ſing to take the young beginnings of this Salvation in their Arms.

Zach. 1. 12. *Rev.* 13. 18. *Iſ.* 40. 2. 41. 25. Cyrus. 27. *Iſ.* 62. 7.

David, though forbidden to build the Temple, yet prepared for it with

1 *Chr.* 28. 3.

with all his might and set his affection upon it, and rejoyced with great joy. *Moses*, though he could not obtain to see the good Land beyond *Jordan*, that goodly Mountain, even *Lebanon* and that pleasant Valley of *Damascus*, which lies between the two *Lebanons* from West to East about 40 miles in length, the sweetest and goodliest Valley that ever the Sun shined upon: As a learned Traveller told me, who was a late eye-witness of its beauty; yet holy *Moses* enjoy'd great pleasure in taking but a prospect of it before he dyed from the top of *Pisgah*.

29. 2,3 9. *Deut.* 3. 25. 34. 1.

Dan. 12. 12. *Rev.* 21. 21, 24.

Beloved *Daniel* pronounceth him blessed, that waiteth and cometh to these happy times, and receives a promise of standing in this Lot of his inheritance in the end of the days: And lastly, blessed *John* prophecying of the New *Jerusalem*, and of the saved Nations which shall walk in the light thereof, and of the Kings of the Earth bringing their glory and honour into it, declares them blessed that do his Commandments, and thereby have right to the Tree of

of Life, and to enter through the Gates into the City. 22.14.

To end, What though several have erred in the Computation of Times, this does no way invalidate the dignity of Scripture Oracles, nor the certainty of their distinctly timed issue; but should stir up others to compare Scriptures more accurately, to search the Ancient Histories more curiously, to discern what providences have writ their comment upon those parts of prophecy already fulfilled, to be diligent in the computation of Eclipses and other appearances of the heavenly bodies. which are the onely true fixers of Chronology, without which all calculations in this nature will prove lame and insignificant, to consider the nature of Scripture years which may somewhat differ from the *Julian*, But above all, to pray ardently for the Spirits conduct, since the Apostle conjoynes the quenching of the Spirit to the despising of prophecy, and know assuredly, That the Vision is for a fixed, an appointed time, and he that shall come will come

1 *Thes.* 5. 19, 20.

Hab. 2. 3.

come and will not tarry, and the benign Dews shall sweetly descend
Mic. 5.7. upon the Mountains of *Zion*, *which tarrieth not (for mans time) nor waiteth for the Sons of Men.*

THE

1673.
Jul. 20.

The Second DISCOURSE ABOUT THE LILLY among THORNS.

Songs 2. 2.

HERE we have Christs own Pencil drawing the beautiful Face of his Spouse from the Glass of his own Countenance, with this difference, *Christ is a Lilly among the Roses of* Sharon, *the Church a Lilly among the Thorns in the Valley of weeping: Christ, the Lilly in Glory, the Church in Grace: Christ in Paradise, the Church in a Wilderness.* And 'tis no small part of his Lilly-like meekness, to own his Church in her thorny estate, and describe her by his own beauty. *She is perfect* v. 1.

Ezek. 16. 14. *through the comelineſs that he puts upon her.* The Churches Moon ſhines by the Rayes of the Sun of Righteouſneſs reflected upon her,

In the words obſerve:

1. The nature and feature of the Church ſet forth by Lillies.

2. The ſcituation of this beautiful Plant: 'Tis among Thorns.

3. Chriſt's tender affection to his Church while ſet among the Thorns: She is the love of Chriſt.

4. The compaſſion of Chriſt implyed in this his own Deſcription. He himſelf takes kind notice, how his beloved Spouſe is encompaſſed and endangered by Thorns and Bryars.

There be ſome, (as *Brightman* and *Cotton*) who reduce this Song to a Prophecy, and the *Chaldee* Paraphraſt refers this ſtaff of the Song to the time of captivity; I ſuppoſe he means that of *Babylon*. I ſhall not diſcuſs thoſe Prophetical Notions on this Song of Songs; nor be very ſollicitous about the ſort of Lilly here aſſum'd for the Metaphor. Whe-

Whether the Tulip of *Perſia*, to which *Solomon* is reſembled, when in all his glory; or whether that, now called the Lilly of the Vallies, which bears that curious lovely Flower growing among Woods and Thickets. *Mat.6.29.*

Neither ſhall I enlarge my Diſcourſe upon this Lilly-Valley, by drawing Parallels between it and the Church as to its beauty, tenderneſs, lowlineſs, purity, candor or fragrancy; its grateſulneſs to the Nerves and Medicinal Virtue for affections of the Head, its ſudden growth and bloſſoming in the Spring time of the year. But leave all theſe for ſubjects to pious meditations, and repair to the 2*d*. branch of the Text, *ſcil.* The ſtate or poſition of the Church of Chriſt among Thorns. By Thorns are meant the Daughters, ſo ſays the Spirit. And as there are two ſorts of Daughters, the Daughters of Men and the Daughters of *Jeruſalem*, it may be demanded what Daughters are ſet forth by the Thorns in the Text? *Gen.6.4.* *Song.2.7.*

A. I anſwer, That ſince the Daughters of *Jeruſalem* were the outward Profeſſors in the Jewiſh Church, who might poſſibly at firſt be ſignified by Weeds in the Garden. But when once they became Perſecutors, I ſuppoſe that they are not incongruouſly compared to the Brambles of the Deſert. For ſurely as *Bernard* glances, ſhe is *mala filia quæ pungit Eccleſiam*, an untoward Daughter that ſcratches the Church. Yet, ſince the Wilderneſs is the proper and native Seat of Brambles; this Text may poſſibly reflect upon the Lilly of the Gentile Church. But 'tis ſafer to take in the whole Spouſe of Chriſt, and ſhew, That both Heathens and formal Profeſſors are very offenſive and uncomfortable Aſſociates to the Church of Chriſt.

Bern. *in Cor.*

Obſ. That the Lord Jeſus hath moſt tender love to his Church, while vexed and diſquieted by the Tribulations of this World. Great love to them as Lillies, but yerning bowels as in the midſt of Thorns.

This

This Point divides it ſelf into two Parts.

The ſtate of the Church in this World. 1.

The love of Chriſt to her in this State. 2.

I ſhall endeavour to treat of the firſt under 6 Propoſitions.

There's a vaſt diſparity between a Lilly and a Thorn. Thorns are the natural Daughters of the World; or at beſt, but carnal Profeſſors with the Maſque of Religion. The Lilly is a true Saint, an Off-ſet from the Root of Chriſt. He forms his holy Nature in the Church, and then calls her by his own name of a ſpotleſs innocent Lilly. He turns a Bramble into a Lilly by omnipotent grace, and then loves it with a ſpotleſs, endleſs delight. A Child of God may remember his Bramble-nature with holy ſhame and humble thankfulneſs, and labour to lead a ſpiritual, meek, and heavenly life, like a Lilly of Chriſts regenerating. *Prop.* 1. *v.* 1.

This Lilly, it pleaſes divine love and wiſdom to plant in the midſt of a thorny prickly world: 'Tis Chriſt him- 2.

himſelf hath ſet it, and therefore ſees and watches it in this perilous ſtate. His Wiſdom thought meet to ſet it, and his love delights to guard it. Brambles ſuck away the nitrous juice of the earth, to form their pungent prickles, that Lillies may draw more wholeſome balſame..

Saints grow the more gracious by the vicinity of ſcratching Briars, and holy Men ſhould meekly bear their ſtation, ſince 'tis the will of Chriſt.

Its great diſcomfort to a Saint that's very gracious, to live in a vexing World, But his *tribulation worketh patience* under ſorrows, experience of divine Protection, and hope of glory, and therefore glorys in it, *Wo is me that I ſojourn in* Meſech, *and live in the black Tents of* Kedar, but joys in hope that the Badger-skins of *Kedar*, ſhall one day be changed into the Purple Curtains of *Solomon*. The Church both muſt and may have ſome ſociety with thorny perſons with ſowr tempers, as well as ſinful natures, not one-

Ro. 5. 4.
Pſ. 120. 5.
Songs 1. 5.

ly

y originally wicked but of ſharp and contentious ſpirits.

A ſweet temper mixt with holineſs makes grace more beautiful, eſpecially when planted in the midſt of thorns. Who would expect ſuch a beautiful Lilly as *Abigail* by the ſides of a Churliſh *Nabal*, or a meek *David* near a taunting *Michol*? Thorns are the more uncomely, and the Lillies much more deſireable.

Q. *But how ſhall a Saint behave himſelf among ſuch ruggid and piercing ſpirits?* Q.

A. 1. With holy caution, when thorns be ſo near, remember how ſoon they may prick, Saints muſt take heed of paſſive offence: Not to take it unkindly, as well as not to provoke. A.

Briars are touchy things and act their nature, let them alone to the Juniper Coals of Magiſtrates, or fire from Heaven as they live unfruitful and undeſired, ſo they uſually dy unlamented: No man is any farther troubled at a Dog when he ſnarles or bites, then to avoid his curriſh *Pſ.* 120.4

temper, who expects from an Ass but rude braying; from a Horse but surly kicks; from a Swine, but mire and grunting; or from Thorns, but scratches. Stand out of their way as much as possible, and let such beasts bite and fight and scratch together, *let thy delight be among the excellent that are in the earth.* *Ps.* 16. 3. *Pro.* 31. 26. *The law of kindness governs the tongue and the law of meekness the heart of a Saint.* 1 *Pet.* 3. 4.

2. Gracious persons should behave themselves inoffensively, as there is beauty, so there's smoothness and lenity in a Lilly. There's no less mercy then majesty in the nature of holiness. A Child of God dares not do that to a wicked man which he suffers from him. A Saint must shine with a winning conversation to the froward: If possible, anoint their sharp prickles with the oil of a soft answer, that when they enter, this may convey a healing drop into the wound. Its said of the Viper, that with his needle-teeth he drops from his head a yellow poysonous liquor dipt in rage, that inflames the wound, let's

2. 1 *Pet.* 2. 23. *and* 3. 1.

let's pour in ſome Balm of *Gilead*, into the gauls and gaſhes of venemous ſpirits; for healing apologies [מרפא] comforts and ſweetens againſt great offences. *Ecc.* 10.4.

3. Patiently, knowing that thorns never ſcratch the Church but as they are moved and waved by the wind of divine providence. This is a Saints comfort though ſuch crooked thorns may rend the tender flower of his body, yet cannot hurt his root. *Though he grow like a ſmall lowly Lilly, yet his roots are like the Cedars of Lebanon.* Ye never ſaw a Bramble ſcratching up the root of a Lilly; as he knows it not, ſo he cannot. A Saints faith in and union to Chriſt remains inviolable. Nay, many times, the pulling off his viſible flowers, makes this root the ſtronger. 3. *Hoſe.* 14.5.

O happy Church! O happy Saint! No enemy can think a malicious thought, but 'tis foreſeen, conducted and often returned upon their own heads by an inviſible power. Be patient, *he ſees that their day is coming who has appointed it.* *Ezek.* 38. 10. *Pſ.* 37.13.

Is. 10.17. *When the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his holy one for a flame, and it shall burn and devour the thorns and briars in one day.*

3. The Church is among thorns as an embleme of its Persecutions, ungodly men are always (*in promptu*) ready for mischief, though not (*in actu*) continually vexing the Church of Christ: every wicked man has a Bramble in his heart, and sometimes hangs out at his mouth in bitter
Gal. 4.29. taunts. *The Son of the Bond woman will persecute him that is born after the Spirit.* The Nightingale sings with a thorn at her breast by night, though she sees it not always, yet may sometimes feel it. Its vain for the Church to promise self-security in a Land of Scorpions. Let the wind blow from any corner either of Paganisme or Heresie: the storms will impetuously clash the thorns upon the Lillies, and the Churches sides receive many a gash. She hath
Jud. 8.16. bin often taught wisdom from the Briars and Thorns of the Wilderness. But here our thorns are the malepert daughters of *Jerusalem*.

Such

Such as grow in Gardens are the worſt, becauſe the ranker ſoile breeds the ſtrongeſt prickles. The ſharpeſt Perſecutions pierce the Church from the daughters of formal *Jeruſalem*; as may appear by the *Jewiſh*, *Arian*, and Popiſh Tyrannies over the Spouſe of Chriſt. Mark an Apoſtate *Julian*, that ſcoffs and taunts moſt bitterly againſt the Church, according to that old ſaying, *Omnis apoſtata oſor ſui ordinis*. Every Apoſtate hates the party from which they declined, and become of all Perſecutors the moſt cruel and barbarous. Thorns that are nigheſt by education, produce the ſharpeſt tryals, as the Pſalmiſt Prophecied in the Perſon of Chriſt, *My familiar friend hath lift up his heel againſt me*, with which the Prophet accords, *Theſe are the wounds received in the houſe of my friends*, *My Mothers Children are angry with me*. The ſweeteſt wine makes the ſharpeſt Vinegar. The neareſt Relations the moſt bitter conflicts, who ought to yield the moſt tender embraces. *Bernard* obſerves *they had not God to their*

Gal. 4. 25.

Pſ. 41. 9.

Zac. 13. 6.

Song. 1. 6.

Bern. *ib.*

their Father, but the Devil, though they boasted of their formal Mother. A cruel Mother that milks out poyson and spits venome in the face of her Children, pretends the hony of peace and discipline, and mixes the gall of pride, and flings out firebrands.

4. 4. This Song presents but *one* Lilly among many thorns, *my dove* says Christ, *my undefiled is but one*, ther's but one Spouse, one Bride of Christ.

1. 1. *One* to shew the paucity of true Believers, as to the multitude of ungodly persons, hypocrites and formal Professors. Briars multiply vastly, the very tops of Brambles will shoot down and take root in the neighbouring mould. The heads and hearts of the wicked run in the earth to a vast extent, but a Lilly never. Feracious and fruitful is the nature of sin and sinners. How many Families fill'd with unholy persons, scarce a Lilly to be found. How few true Saints in City or Country: As the Prophet speaks of the Berries of an Olive-tree,

tree, *one of a City or two of a Tribe to come to Zion.* Is. 17.6. Jer. 3.14.

2. *One* to ſhew their unity, one root, though many flowers. The Church delights in oneneſs of heart and ſociety. Unity and verity cling together, falſity and diviſion are very numerous. The wicked ſeldome agree but in tearing and defacing the Church, *Pilat* and *Herod* joyn hands againſt Chriſt, and mark what a crew of enemies unite and confederate againſt the Church, elſe there's little union among the wicked, becauſe pride (the principle of diviſion) *compaſs them like a chain, and therefore violence as a garment.* Their enmity to the Church drags them into ſome temporary union as with an iron Chain. The Popiſh Synagogue brags of their general union: 'Tis but a Spaniſh brag. For one of their Cardinals numbers above three hundred differences of opinion in the Romiſh Church, and one of their Caſuiſts confeſſes near threeſcore differences in the point of Confeſſion, and many more might be added of Popes and Counſels and Pſ. 83.5,6. Pſ. 73.6. Bp. Hall *peace of* Rome. Lond. 1603.

and Frieries one against another. But the true Church hath an admirable union, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, *Jerusalem* is a City compact together, and at unity within her self. Though outward Professors have some variance, yet in the grand fundamental of free grace and salvation by faith alone the confessions of the Reformed Churches rejoyce in a sweet harmony, as to lesser points, Oh that it were as it ought to be and shall be in the glorious times that are a coming.

3. 3. *One*, to shew what concerns the Church in general, is applicable to every member. Each promise and priviledge is universal and yet peculiar, to teach Believers that are in Covenant to lay hold on every promise, as if made to them alone. *Abraham*'s promise is thine, for it was not written for his sake alone but for us also if we believe. What was said to *Joshua*, was said to thee, *he will nver leave thee nor forsake thee.* Its common faith and common salvation, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Rom. 23, 24.

Heb. 13. 5. *Tit.* 1. 4. *Jude* 3. *Heb.* 11. 40.

The

The Church is a Dove that brings an Olive-branch to every *Noah*, within the Ark of Christ; the love of Christ is general to all, and singular to each individual member. Each Saint hath an equal title to his love and all spiritual joys as the whole.

The Lilly is not only encumbred with thorns but grows amongst them. 'Tis not a dead flower cropt and flung there, but thrives and flourishes though hedg'd and hem'd with thorns. It sends forth a gracious smell among noisome briars, when planted there by Christ. Oh learn to adorn Religion in a barren soil amidst troublous enemies, that's the glory of a Saint, to be a *Joseph*, a *Moses* in the midst of *Ægypt*, an *Obadiah* at *Samaria*, a *Nehemiah* in *Shushan*, a *Joanna* in *Herod*'s Court, In a thorny family among sharp relations, in a prickly Land to scent like Heaven. To retaine growing innocency and tender-hearted-lenity *in a crooked and perverse Nation*. To beautifie and sweeten the dunghil World. To il- 5. *Luke* 8.3. *Phil.* 2. 15.

luſtrate a wild Common full of briars by the purity of holineſs. To pray for ſuch as prick their ſides, *to do good to ſuch as hate and ſpitefully ſcratch them*, a ſpirit of God and a ſpirit of glory reſts upon them, to be filled with the good will of him that dwelt and ſhined in the briar of *Horeb*: This is to be like our heavenly Father. 'Tis no great praiſe to be quiet in a Hermitage, and to fly like a Dove from *Kedar*, but in the midſt of buſineſs, relations and troubles, then ſhines the grace of a Saint.

6. 6. The Churches Lilly often receives protection from the thorns about them. The ſame hand planted both thorns and lillies. The lilly within, and the thorns for protection about it. The Briars often twiſt and twine themſelves into an arbor to defend the Church. *Saul* and the *Philiſtines* encountring together gave eſcape to *David*. *Julian* and the *Perſians* delivered the primitive Chriſtians. The *Sadduces* and *Phariſees* conflict reſcued *Paul* into the hands of *Lyſias*. The

Acts 23. 7.

Church

Church often grows ſafely under the intangled counſels of infatuated *Achitophels*, and ſubtile *Hamans*.

While they perplex and involve each other, they become inſnared by the works of their own hands, and the Church ſings *Higgaion Selah*. The ſtate of *Geneva* is compared to a bone that 3 ſturdy Maſtiffs ſtand by and ſnarl one at another, but dare not touch it. The Motto upon the Churches briars, may well be that of *Scotland*'s thiſtles, *ne impune laceſſant*: God fences his lillies about by the thorns of carnal Profeſſors, as well as the tall Brambles of *Baſhan*, the open and violent *Pagan* enemies. The multitudes of Formaliſts in and about the Church a wiſe God turns both to ſhadow and ſhelter; to ſhadow from the ſcorching Sun that would wither it, and to ſhelter it from the foot of Beaſts, the foot of pride and violence that might tread it down. They are always good ſubjects, uſeful and painful and faithful in their ſtations. *Joſeph*'s frugal prudence *Pſ.* 2. 16.

gat

gat him favour in the eye of *Pharaoh*. *Mordecai*'s truſtineſs to the life of *Ahaſuerus* raiſed him to honour, and *Daniel*'s ſagacity and expertneſs in affairs, was a notable ſtep to his perſonal honour, his further advancement in the riſing *Perſian* Court, and a return for the Church of God out of *Babylon*.

Let's deſcend to apply, the Uſe is two-fold, to the thorns and lillies.

Uſe 1. 1. To the Thorns in ſome particulars.

1. 1. Remember your vile original, what are you? but the curſed fruit of the fall, whoſe bramble natures breed unkind and pricking ſpirits. God planted no thorns in Paradiſe. The ſtate of innocency knew no ſuch crooked tempers. *He created man upright, but he ſought out many inventions.* *Ecc.* 7.29.

2. 2. To the Thorns among Lillies. Moſt of the Worlds briars grow without any lillies among them. They live among Nettles, Hemlock and Henbane and other poyſonous Plants, ſtinging, and tearing, and choak-

choaking one another, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another, but remember you that have Lillies among you; their humility, fragrancy, lenity, purity ſhould provoke you to holy emulation. They live peaceably by you, ſcratch them not. Happy thorns, did you know it; God would ſoon fold you up into bundles and deliver you to the furnace of his wrath, were it not for his Choſen among you, *Suffer them a while, let the Briars grow till the Harveſt*, ſays our Lord, *Then ſhall his Angels gather out of his Kingdom, all things that offend and them which do iniquity and caſt them into a furnace of fire; there ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth.* *Tit.* 3. 3. *Mat.* 13. 30. v. 41.

3. Let wicked perſecuting thorns conſider their end. *That earth that beareth thorns and briars is rejected and is nigh unto curſing, whoſe end is to be burnt.* Unſerviceable, unprofitable wretches cumber the ground, ſuck away the juice from Gods Plants, unfit for building, and injurious, that which their prickly venome heat 3. *Heb.* 6. 8.

heat and infeſt the hands that touch them. Take heed of perſecuting the meek and humble Lillies. There's no one ſin more criminal and provoking in the ſight of God.

Pſ. 7. 13. He ordains his arrows againſt the Perſecutors and dooms them to eternal fire. When once perſons fall to that ſin, God maketh way and

Pſ. 58. 9. room for his wrath. *Before the pots can feel the thorns* &c. a dark place but ſharp againſt Gods enemies: *Arias* and *Glaſſius* tranſlate it, *antequam ſpinæ intelligant rhamnum*, &c. *Before the Thorns apprehend a Bramble*, an elegant metaphor from the growth of rational creatures. Before the young tender thorns ſhall ariſe to the capacity of a great bramble to do more miſchief. The word סיר in the plural maſculine ſignifies thorns, and the *Targum* gloſſes the Text thus, while they

Iſa. 54. 13. are tender and green,: while in

Eccl. 7. 8. their youth and vigour, as Husbandmen cut down thorns before they grow rampant, ſo will the Lord tear off wicked Perſecutors with the whirlwind and burn them with the.

the fire of his wrath before they grow old, withered and dry, while yet in the ſap and ſtrength, while they are lively and flouriſhing. The deſign of the Pſalmiſt expreſſes the wrath of God againſt his enemies before they ſhall finiſh their purpoſes to bring utter deſtruction to the Congregation of the juſt.

To the Lillies themſelves. *Uſe 2.*

1. Reſemble your heavenly pattern. Take heed of moroſity, you never found a thorn in the root, leaf or flower of a lilly, but what was thruſt in by a Briar, it agrees not to the meek and gentle nature of holineſs. Pride and imperiouſneſs of ſpirit is contrary to the humility of a Lilly, ſtiffneſs and perverſneſs are unſuitable to the flexible temper of that lovely plant. Drooping and deſponding unbecomes the erect and brisk aſpect of its flower. Saints ſhould labour to joy in the Lord always. Study for ſuch innocency, mildneſs, winning, ingenious tempers, and candour of ſpirit as may ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men, that by holy and heavenly 1.

venly frames of heart and life they may convince the briars that tear them of their fiery, unrighteous sharpness. Saints must shew a better spirit dwelling in them, then the world knows off, sweet thoughts issuing into courteous and affable words, smelling fragrantly of heavens influence, and the dews of *Zion* moistning their lovely hearts with a conversation so amiable as may glorifie their heaven-born race that all about them may delight to come within them, to taste of their
Song 4.13. delicious spirits as if they dwelt in a garden of Pomegranats.

A Lilly is a tractable Plant, a briar is of a sullen, churlish, rough, Nabal-like spirit. Wicked mens
2 *Sam.* 23. 6.7. tempers are commonly like nettles and thorns thrust away that cannot be taken with hands, he that touches them must be fenced with iron, and the staff of a spear, and they shall be utterly burnt with fire in the same place, not to be handled without hedgers gloves, without guards and fences, but so must not Saints, yet, take heed of offences even

even to the Sons of *Belial*. A Lilly will not cannot hurt a thorn. You never heard a Sheep barking, at a Dog, or ſaw a Dove fly after a Bird of Prey. A Saint muſt not be of a ſturdy, dogged, proud, rapacious inſolent and revengeful temper, but commit themſelves to God, *For Vengeance is mine ſaith the Lord, I'll repay it.* Rom. 12. 9.

Q. But may not a Saint ſometimes uſe the prick of reproof? *Q.*

A. When the neceſſity of their calling, ſtation and relation requires it, 'tis their duty. *They muſt in no wiſe hate their Brother in their heart, but ſhew their love by rebuking him, and not ſuffer ſin upon him.* Lev. 19. 17. But, *if he be a ſcorner he'll never love his reprover, neither will he go unto the wiſe*, but fight and quarrel and backbite moſt venomouſly. *He that reproveth a ſcorner gets ſhame and blots and hatred.* Pro. 15. 12. Pro. 9. 7. Therefore remember the ſphere of thy ſtation and go no further. Thorns are always ſcratching and cenſuring Saints for reproof though bound in duty, and though never ſo mild, where-

A.

ſore

fore let the Lillies whiteneſs, purity and humility be a ſilent ſtanding reproof againſt their neighbouring briars.

2. 2. Do you belong to this heavenly Plant? are you like to Chriſt? are ye his lillies indeed? [*Let's try*] can you bear their prickly thorns with meekneſs of patience. A good nature is ſeen more in bearing and paſſing by injuries that might provoke a nettling temper, then in beſtowing of benefits. Will ye pretend to a lilly and cant bear a prick in your good name for Chriſt, nor a thorn in your liberty for the Goſpel ſake, nor a ſcratch in your purſes for pure worſhip and the honourable name of the great Lillie of the Vallies, what conformity bear we to Chriſt? The Head of the Church was girt and gored with a Crown of thorns for us, and muſt not the Churches Sides expect the like, *Delicatus es Chriſtiane* &c. ſaid *Jerome*, *thou art too dainty*, that muſt be Crowned with roſes here and glory hereafter: what, ſwim in a River of oil, into the

the river of Paradiſe; no, no! *Canaanites* will be thorns in your ſides till ye come to that *Canaan* above. Deceive not your ſelves, ſcandals at the Croſs make formaliſts ſtumble into Apoſtacy. A great *Roman* Emperor tryed his Courtiers and State Officers by Proclamation, *who would renounce Chriſtianity*, to prove their conſtancy, and ſuch who for flattery or fear fled back from the truth, he turned out of their places, telling them, *that ſuch who were falſe to their Saviour, would never be true to their Emperor.* Our great Lord and King of the Church ſometimes tries whether we will ſuffer thorns in our comforts, rather then in our conſciences. Turning times are trying times.

3. Pray for the dews of heavenly grace to fall like Orient Pearls upon your lillies. No matter what briars among us, ſo heavens influences ſhowr down upon us. What need we beſo much concerned for a ſcratch, if a Balſam drop from Heaven preſently cure it? If multitudes 3. *Pſ.* 94, 19.

titudes of thoughts ramble and tumble within us, let divine comforts delight our souls: a rare word in the Hebrew taken from the solaces, dancings, dandlings, singings of tender Mothers to their froward and fretful Children. If thou canst find and feel God to be in Covenant with thee, and taking thee in arms and cherishing thee on the knees of his affection like a Father, what matter what the scullions in the Kitchin, and wicked men the rods of his wrath, the Hang-men and Executioners of Divine Judgments in the earth, be they never so great, speak and twit against thee thou knowest thy Fathers love is solid and permanent, though by an affliction he chide for a fault, yet his heart is with thee, he'll never leave thee till he bring thee to himself, and to the high inheritance. Let all the Devils in Hell fling their ragged firebrands at thee, make but a tush of it in the name of the Father of mercies, they can't hurt thee. Pray for the gentle *Zephyrus*, the sweet breathings of Gods Spirit to

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Job. 14.3. 17.24.

to flow down and invigorate your Beds of Spices. *Song* 4.16.

4. Care not what the World counts, If God pronounce you to be his Lillies. Labour to be more eminently what God ſtyles you, for what he loves you, and for what the World hates you: *If the World hate you*, ſaies our Lord, *ye know that it hated me before it hated you, If ye were of the World, the World would love its own, but becauſe ye are not of the world, but I have choſen you out of the world, therefore the World hateth you.* In his heavenly prayer our Lord alſo addreſſeth thus to the Father; *I have given them thy word and the World hath hated them, becauſe they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.* Diſgrace from the world, let it arm you from going back, and let holy emulation edge you forward. *Love not the world, nor the things of this world*, the childiſh faſhion, the apiſh attire, the vain pomp and gliſtering gewgaws, the tickling and ſoul-alienating pleaſures of this tranſient and periſhing life. Be ſolid 4. *John* 15. 18. *John* 17. 14.

and ſerious perſons, let your affections be riſen with Chriſt to the
Col. 3. 1. pleaſures and treaſures that are above.

5. 5. Take heed of the thorns within, more then them without. While your ſoul tabernacles in fleſh, it dwells in a Thicket of thorns, ſcarce ſees Heaven but through Crannies.
2 *Cor.* 12. 7. *Paul* had this thorn, *a thorn given*, but it bore roſes at laſt, His ſufferings incenſed him to fight *the good fight of faith* the more couragiouſly.

O the piercing thorns of temptation that annoy the choiceſt Saints! he mourns more intenſely for the thorns at his heart, then thoſe at his feet. He cuts down the former, but they grow again, *Hinc ille lachryma*, hence his continual ſpring of tears; the others without him he tramples down valiantly. Worldly cares, fiery tryals, dark deſertions that touch his heart, theſe exerciſe his faith and patience. But O the fearful Bramble of Original luſt, a bramble like the Oakes in *Baſhan* as big as the Waſte of his ſoul. Here he lays

lays on with the ax of Repentance every day, and makes the Chips to fly, till death help him to fetch the killing ſtroke upon all his deadly enemies. He ſweats and pants till he gets the Victory.

6. Be very ſolicitous to keep your ſelves from the thorns without. To live holy, and ward off wicked mens blows with all prudence conſiſtent with confeſſion of truth and the name of Chriſt, *walk in wiſdom toward them that are without; let your ſpeech be alway with grace, ſeaſoned with Salt. If your ſalt be unſavoury, wherewith* (ſays our Lord) *ſhall it be ſeaſoned*. A violent calcining fire takes away much of the grateful ſavour of ſalt. Take heed of fiery tryals that are to try them that dwell upon the earth; *If ye draw back, my ſoul* (ſaith God) *ſhall have no pleaſure in you*, a dreadful ſaying, to be like *Iſrael*'s veſſel wherein there's no pleaſure. *Immundum vas ſeu inutile &c. quo ad projicienda ſtercora uti ſolemus.* a veſſel made for the requiſites of nature to be

6. *Col.* 4. 5. *Heb.* 10. 38. *Hoſea* 8. 8. Hieronym. *in loc.*

fill'd with things unſeemly: let Saints ſtudy to be holy and uſeful and likewiſe to be careful and watchful againſt the tinctures and temptations of a prophane World. A Saint muſt always carry about him a dove-like heart and ſometimes uſe the nimble ſparkling eye of the Serpent to guard his dove-like innocency. *Spina pœna eſt*, thorns will be afflictive. To live near them and not to be hurt is the fruit of divine grace and power, but 'tis uſually connext with our uſe of holy wiſdom towards them. Perſecutions are oftentimes chaſtiſements for ſin, and preparations for glory. Though a fruit of the fall, yet they become medicinal to a Saint; his troubles being his comforts. Boyſterous winds hurry a Ship to its haven. Dangerous diſeaſes often ferment the bloud into a purity for more proſperous health. The poiſon of ſin mingles the potion of repentance. *Andromachus's Treakle* compoſed of a *Viper* cures its venome. The fleſh of a Scorpion applyed to the place affected, healed

ἀπὸ θήρας *e vipera.*

healed *Olearius* of his pain and torment. A Saints inward bitings from Satan are cured by the Dragons bloud ſlain by the Spear of Chriſt. Its ſaid that *Crocodile*'s tears pierce the skull of man, I am ſure that a Saints penitent tears diſſolve the head and all the inventions of Satan. To end; a gracious ſoul may gather the flowers of aſſurance from the ſharp prickles of temptation and perſecution. He ſucks much hony of the thorns that moleſt and afflict him.

Olear. Travels p. 195

VVendelin de nilo *C.* 16. *G.* §. 11.

7. Aſſociate with heavenly Lillies. All the World beſides are but thorns. The common Daughters of *Jeruſalem* are lillies in ſhew, but have thorns in heart, and ſometimes grow out from the midſt of their ſeeming flowers. They'll prick ſometimes as peeviſhly and perverſely as open wicked men, and as the Daughters of *Babylon*. What delight can a Saint take in their vain converſe, their pride and worldlineſs? Many ſtrange Profeſſors ſtart up now adays that bear the leaves of their godly Fathers

7.

but not their fruit, they go for Daughters of *Zion*, but are *haughty, walk with ſtretched forth necks, and wanton eyes, mincing or tripping nicely as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet. Capitantibus Calceis & Crepidis inſiſtentes*, With their flaps and flaps proclaiming their levity and folly, but their hearts are little worth, *and their tongues like Serpents fork'd with enmity*, and ſharp like crooked thorns againſt the ways of holineſs, *let's depart from them and go with our Beloved into the Gardens, to the beds of Spices to feed in the Gardens and to gather Lillies*, where Chriſt has his ſets and knots of Lillies, has pure and holy worſhiping Churches, there let's aſſemble, though briars be near, yet Chriſt is nigher.

Is. 3. 16. *A Lap.* *Prov.* 16. 20. *Song* 6. 2.

8. 8. Long for Heaven. Send up the fragrant odours of your prayers into Paradiſe where no bleak wind, no chilling ſhowrs, no piercing thorns ſhall trouble more. Let theſe Wilderneſs-prickles ſharpen thy pace towards Heaven, *being well ſhod with the preparation of the Goſ-*

Eph. 6. 15.

Goſpel of peace, yet leap nimbly through them and haſten from them. Cry out of the Valley, the *Settims*, the ſharp Buſhes in the Plains of *Moab*, and pant for *Lebanon* where thy Lilly ſhall be planted under the true Vine and the Tree of Life; where thorns in duties, relations, enjoyments ſhall make thy ſpirit to bleed no more. Where thorns from Devils and a wicked World ſhall affront and gaſh no more, where thorns from our own hearts or others tongues ſhall wound no more, whether from the Daughters of *Gath*, or *Jeruſalem*, from outragious wickedneſs, or perverſe formaliſme ſhall touch or prick or puniſh the Church no more. 2 *Sam.* 1. 20.

O pray for that Sabbath of reſt, that *Jubilee* of joy, when from all thy labours, ſorrows and tears thou ſhalt reſt in the boſome of eternal love, when the furrows made by the torrent of tears in thy hollow cheeks ſhall be fill'd up by the Balm of *Gilead*, when all thy wounds and ſcarrs ſhall be bathed into ſmoothneſs and beautifully heal'd

in those rivers of pleasure that flow at the right hand of him that sits upon the Throne, for evermore.

Add. I should come now to the Second branch of the Doctrine to set forth the love of Christ to his Church and each holy Soul while sighing and groaning among the thorns of this Valley of *Achor*. whereof briefly and close.

1. 1. He forms holy sighs and groans in *thy* Spirit by *his* Spirit. *Ezek.* 36. 27. He sends his dove into our hearts, and then we mourn like doves in the clefts of the rock of Ages. He puts his spirit within us, and then *Rom.* 8. 27. hearkens to the groanings of his *Song* 2. 14. own Spirit, *O my dove, let me hear thy voice*, why? *beeause thy Countenance is comely: Non placet vox, si* Bern. *displiceat facies*, our face is comely in the beauty of his righteousness, and therefore our voice is pleasant through the melody of his Spirit.

2. 2. Christ sighs with thee. He mingles the tears of his Cross with the tears of thy crucifiing afflictions.

ons. *In all their affliction he is afflicted.* The thorn never pricks the sides of the Church, but *it touches the apple of his eye.* Is this lilly parch'd with the Sun? *Cor Christi æstuat*, the heart of Christ is affected with holy sympathy. Is it blasted with East-winds? he comforts and relieves it by sweet Western Gales of his Spirit. Is it spotted and stained with dirt struck up by the foot of Beasts? he washes it clean in his own laver, our very hairs are numbred, our tears bottled, our desires known, our steps and wandrings are measured, our groans are not hid from him, our members are written in his Book that not a bone is broken but he sets them again. *Is.* 63. 9. *Zach* 2. 8. *Ps.* 56. 8.

3. Christ appears graciously in time of distress; he came into the Church when the doors were shut for fear of the *Jews*, and breathed his peace upon them. He was with the Church in the Wilderness, he visited the lillys in the thorny bush, and conducted them & planted them in the Land of *Canaan*. It was his *hortus* 3.

pen-

penſilis & ambulatorius, he delighted in his walking Garden through the howling Deſarts of *Arabia*, the Type and Emblem of his Goſpel Church in all her ſcatterings and thirſty marches, and will never forſake them till like conquering *Joſhua* he bring them to their appointed reſt. Neither is there any of the leaſt of his beloved ones but he will vouchſafe a gracious ear to their petitions, and carry them in his boſome as all the days of old.

Iſ. 40. 41. 63. 9. 4.

4. He delivers frequently, inceſſantly, perſeveringly, he loves them to the end. He *gave Ægypt for their Ranſome, Æthiopia and Seba for them*, This is matter of argument in our prayer *thou haſt delivered this people out of* Ægypt *until now*. And what if we be not fit for mercy, he is always fit to ſhew it when heavenly wiſdom judges meet. The times of the Church are in the hands of a Father who conſults his own bowels and the expediency of his own glory. In that day when the deſign and decrees of mercy, unite in accompliſhment

Iſ. 43. 3.

Numb. 14. 19.

pliſhment, he can form the hearts of men and faſhion them upon the wheel of Providence. Let none deſpond becauſe the Church is not prepared for approaching deliverance. The Prophets are full of this encouragement that in ſuch a day he will powr out another ſpirit, and make all things fall in joint and to hit the mark of his appointment. The time is haſtening and at the doors, that the Lord will powr out clean water upon his Sanctuary *he will do a new thing on the earth*, now it ſhall ſpring forth עתה תצמח *nunc germinabit*, τὸ νῦν ἀνατελεῖ a manifeſt alluſion with that of *Zachary*, *I will bring forth my Servant*, [Zemach] *the BRANCH*, called by *Luke* ἀνατολὴ ἐξ ὕψους the Branch from on High: whenthe Beaſts of the field, the Dragons and Owls of the *Gentile* Wilderneſs ſhall honour me *Then ſhall Zion bud forth and great ſhall be the glory of her Children, from the North, and from the Weſt, and thoſe from the Land of* Sinim. Which ſome as *Arias* and others, un-

Iſ. 43. 19.
Zech. 3. 8. 6. 12.
Iſ. 49. 12.

understand of *China*, but more likely of *Sin* or *Peluſium* by a trope for the Land of *Ægypt*, *Sin* being the great fortreſs at the entrance of *Ægypt*, and South of the Land of *Canaan*.

5. *He is ſore diſpleaſed with the Heathen that are at eaſe.* When Gods a little diſpleaſed, they leap like Lions from *Baſhan* upon the Church. When God is wroth with his People for their unholineſs and defilements, *they ſhew no mercy. But God will put a Hook in their noſe, and lead them back like beaſts into the Land of Slaughter, for Sacrifices in the Temples of their own Gods.* Heathen briars may flouriſh and ſpread their twins far and near, but when once they moleſt his Church *they are nigh to burning*. *Pompey* proſpered not after he ſtumbled in the Temple of *Jeruſalem*. Many and fatal inſtances occur in Hiſtory of Gods vindictive Juſtice upon his enemies, when once they laid hands upon the precious things of *Zion*. *Diſcite juſtitiam moniti*, &c. learn to beware of *Herod*'s deſtiny, ſmote

Zech. 1. 15.

Iſ. 47. 6.

37. 29.

ſmote by an Angel in the midſt of all his glory.

6. Theſe Thorns never prick and vex the Church but by his permiſſion and guidance, and when he hath performed his work upon Mount *Zion*, he will puniſh the fruit of their ſtout hearts, and the glory of their high looks. When the People of *Zion* are meek and humble then they ſhall ariſe out of obſcurity, and ſhake of their duſt and Kings ſhall come to the glory of *Zions* riſing, *humiliatio parit humilitatem*, *Sanctified humiliation brings advancing humility*. All their thorns ſhall be conſecrated into *ſweet briars*, and all their pricking vexations ſhall prove medicinal, like potions made of the *Carduus benedictus*, the *bleſſed thiſtle*. The troubles of the Church both for time and meaſure are guided by her wiſe ad holy Husband, who hath charged the toſſing waves of the Sea, *hitherto ſhall ye come and no further*. 6. *Iſ.* 13. 12. *Iſ.* 60. 3. Bern.

7. He praiſes his Church and ſets off her beauty by the uncomelineſs of the adjoyning thorns. *She is* 7.

is black but comely, ſcratcht but beautiful. A Dove begrim'd among the Pots but a Dove ſtill.

Song. 2. 10. *Ariſe my Dove, my love, my fair one, my joy, come away.* The Tents

Song 1. 5. of *Kedar* let a luſtre upon the Curtains of *Solomon*. A *Jacob* in *Laban*'s Family, a *Joſeph* in *Pharaoh*'s, an *Obadiah* in *Ahab*'s, gives a perfume to the place they dwell in.

Zach. 2. 4. there's a wall of fire between the lillies and the thorns, to cheriſh the lillies and to conſume the thorns. There's a black ſide of the Cloud to dannt the *Ægyptians*, but a bright ſide to enlighten and comfort *Iſrael*.

Infer. 1. Let not the Church be diſcouraged for Chriſt owns and loves her in the midſt of deformities, imbecilities and conflicts. Though ſometimes weak and a little *heady* and conceited, 'tis his beloved Spouſe ſtill, whom he intends to form and beautifie for himſelf. A tender father pitties his ſick and weakly Child, moſt of all. A gracious Husband compaſſionates his ſickly Spouſe eſpecially if ſick of love,

His

His left hand is under her head, and his right hand doth embrace her. Song 2. 6.
A little pettiſhneſs and frowardneſs does not alienate his heart from her, if right in the main; his generous love winks at many things and pardons all. Though the Moon have her ſpots, the Sun diſtains not to ſhine upon her, and though a Saint may have ſome fooliſhneſs, yet God delivers him from draggling in the mire, and ſuffers him not to ſink Iſ. 69. 5. 14.

Uprightneſs may conſiſt with many imperfections. God takes his meaſures by ſincerity and not infirmity, that's a Saints joy. He conſiders our tentations and knows our frame *and remembers that we are but duſt.* Some frowardneſs and frettings in the midſt of integrity, nay a ſpark of grace is highly regarded though at firſt ſtruck from Heaven into an ocean of corruption within us, its kindling and will be flaming. We have our coolings and our warmths, ſome beauty though ſome deformities, and the heart is all with God, if the Infer. 2. Pſ. 103 14

the bent and tenour of the ſpirit be towards him, onely take heed leſt our weakneſſes ſhould eclipſe his praiſe, deſpond our ſpirits in holy duties, and indulging of touchy flaſhes ſhould habituate into fierceneſs, and thereby become envious at our betters in grace, and at laſt droop and ſink into an uncomfortable frame of ſpirit, and then cenſure and backbite others that faithfully and meekly reprove us for our folly, and would reſtore us to a heavenly frame and communion with God.

Infer. 3. Be ſenſible and meek under every tryal. Let croſſes crucifie the fleſh within thee, and let every affliction mortifie the body of ſin and death, and ſtill remember thou art Chriſts Lilly, though diſtreſſed by manifold thorns. Keep in the royal highway to Heaven between fainting and confidence. Prov. 24. 10. He that faints, the ſtrength of his faith is ſmall. Nouriſh faith by Promiſes, they are the milk and hony of the Land of *Canaan*. Keep always ſome of theſe precious cordials

dials in the bottles of memory,& be ware alſo of too much confidence & ſelfconceit. *Qui ſe ſibi magiſtrum conſtituit ſtulto ſe diſcipulum ſubdit,* a ſelf taught perſon has a fool to his Maſter. Bern. *Epiſt.* 87.

The Church as far tranſcends the World as a pure unſpotted Lilly outſhines a crew of intricate thorns upon a cragged rock, or as a garden of roſes in *Sharon* is more pleaſant then the curſed Mountains of *Gilboa*, unpaſſable by briars and brambles. Inſer. 4.

Puniceis humilis quantum ſaliunca roſetis.

As fragrant roſes prickly thorns excel
Brambles and Myrtles yield no parallel. *Iſ.* 55. 13.

Let none value true Saints by external grandeur, but their vertues and graces, humility ſweetneſs, peacefulneſs and innocency. Many Profeſſors are eſteemed for riches and titles, for gold rings and gawdy cloths.

*Jam.*2.3. cloths: *Sit here at my right hand*, make room for a Silken Veſt and fine toyes upon an empty head and a barren heart. Oh how our eſtimates ſtick in the mire! whom do you moſt prize and admire, a poor *Heb.* 11. 37. ſheep-skin Saint that ſtands his ground in Perſecution, or a proud Peacock that yelps at a Storme.

James 2.4. *Are ye not carnal and judges of evil thoughts*, Since it appears not now what it is to be a true Son of God, but at that day it will be revealed, 1 *John* 3.2. *when we ſhall ſee him as he is.*

Inſer. 5. Let none ſtand amazed at the pageantry of falſe Churches, nor value the Whore of *Rome* becauſe of her bravery. She's deckt with *Rev.* 18. 16. Pearles and precious ſtones, but ſmells ſtrong of *Ægypt*. All the Perfumes of *Arabia* can't hide or choak her ſtink. 'Tis not Lateran Muſick will conſecrate her Maſſes into audience, nor her incenſe procure acceſs to the Throne of Grace,

Amos 5.22. *I will not ſmell ſays the Lord in your Solemn Aſſemblies. Take away the noiſe of your Songs, the melody of your Viols, let judgment run down*

down as waters and righteouſneſs like a mighty ſtream. I ſhall end with *Bernard* to *Eugenius*, the 4th.

* *Plena eſt ambitioſis eccleſia, non eſt jam quod exhorreat in ſtudiis & molitionibus ambitionis, non plus quam ſpelunca latronum in ſpoliis viatorum.* The Church (of *Rome*) is ſtufft with ambitious perſons, they tremble no more in the ſtudious endeavours after ambitious deſigns, then a den of Robbers at dividing the ſpoyls of innocent travellers. and then tells him to his face among other ſmart but ſerious reflections upon his Lordlineſs, [† *præſis ut proſis*, &c. *ut diſpenſes, non imperes* &c. *Nullum tibi venenum nullum gladium plus formido, quam libidinem dominandi*] govern to edification, act like a Servant, and Steward, not an Emperor, I dread no poyſon, no *aſſaſſinate* more fatal to you, then the luſt of domination.

* Bern. *de conſid. l.* 1. *f.* 238.

† *id. l.* 3 *f.* 240.

Be not offended at the Church of Chriſt becauſe of her mean and troubleſome State. What if the King of *Zion* come meek and lowly,

Inſer. 6.

Zech 9.9. ly, *riding upon an Asſ*, or his holy Apoſtles walking on foot for the Converſion of Nations through the World, what if the ſhowrs of Heaven fall upon the cheeks of the lovely, lowly Lilly, and ſhe ſit weeping among the briars, muſt true religion and pure worſhip be never courted but when the Sun ſhines? The way to *Canaan* lay through ſtones and
Deut. 8.15 rocks, amidſt Lions and Tygers, among Scorpions and fiery flying Serpents; true genuine *Iſrael* muſt through all, and never be appaled, diſmayed or dare to face about to *Ægypt*, of which the Lord hath ſaid
Deut. 17. 16. *ye ſhall return that way no more*, If we ſtartle at the briars about the lillies, & flinch for a few prickles *we are not*
Mat. 10. 37. *worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven.* The troubles are but momentany, the glory eternal. They may hurt the fleſh, but cannot hinder the flight of the ſoul into the boſome of *Abraham*. Let not the Churches afflictions obſtruct your aſſociating to her company which is paſſing under the conduct
Heb. 4. 8. 9. of her 2d *Joſhua*, into everlaſting reſt. Judge not her beauty, 'tis under a

mask

mask, and though beſmeared by the ſoil of her malignant enemies, ſhe is all glorious within. 'Tis our ignorance of the Churches beauty. A comely face muſt not be diſingeniouſly wip't by a malicious tongue, till the duſt and ſpots be waſh'd off and its aſpect clarified, nor a ſweet temper dropt upon becauſe of calumnies, before converſe does open it. 'Tis want of holineſs in moſt, and true love to it, that cauſes ſtumbling at the holy ways of God. 1 *John* 2. 10.

Reſign your ſelves into *his* ſweet and ſtrong tuition, who can incline the worſt of brambles to be a fence and ſecurity to his lillies; and the ſharper and ſtronger they are, the more offenſive to the Churches enemies. *Cyrus* a ravenous Bird from East God called to feaſt upon the ſacrifice of his wrath in the Land of *Chaldea*, to root up the briars of *Babylon*, which had ſo greatly vexed and abuſed his beloved people. All Hiſtories yield notable inſtances of divine ſeverity againſt barbarous perſecutors when once they ſtretch out their hands againſt the Church, they are Infer. 7. *Iſ.* 46. 11.

quickly

quickly withered. To what fearful iſſues the inraged and infatuated inſtruments of Satan in the 10 primitive Perſecutions were reduced, Eccleſiaſtick and Civil ſtory is very pregnant; let's endeavour with all ſincerity and ſedulity to lead lives unblameable and keep Conſcience unſpotted before God and man, and arm our ſelves with holy reſolutions againſt every ſinful courſe wherein we would tremble to appear at the dreadful Judgment ſeat of Chriſt, and God, our gracious father will take care of his part to give us divine protection and preſerve us to his heavenly Kingdom. What bleſſed lives might Chriſtians live did they walk always as under the eye of an Omniſcient God, and with what comfort might they reſign their ſpirits at death into his hands, *as of a faithful Creator*, and merciful Redeemer, obtaining an abundant entrance into the everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

FINIS.